



WOMEN MEDIA AND CHANGE

(WOMECE)

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

VISION

To bridge the gap between rhetoric and action in addressing issues on gender, and empowering women to gain public voice and visibility as well as to have control over their lives.

MISSION

- To conduct research on media needs of women in Ghana.
- To carry out media skills and ICT training for women with leadership potentials, parliamentarians and mid-level career women.
- To build the capacity of media personnel to effectively report on gender and women's issues.
- To publish appropriate publications on women and gender
- To advocate for the rights of women

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Women Media and Change (WOMECE) is first of all grateful to all its partners and funders for their inputs in the work of WOMECE, yearly.

WOMECE wishes to express its thanks to NETRIGHT for the honors of representing NETRIGHT at the launch of 'Atlas of Birth' by the Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights (ARHR) which is channeled at laying bare the statistics of maternal mortality in Ghana, and giving solutions to how the nation can come together to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 5 which aims at improving maternal mortality rates.

WOMECE is also very grateful to the ARHR for making available the 'Atlas of Birth' for criticism and input to help improve its content on the next publication.

The organization would secondly want to thank all the politicians who availed themselves for the radio programme, 'Woman to Woman' on Uniiq 95.7. We also want to thank the production team without whom our intentions would not have been a reality. We very much appreciate their support and contribution.

WOMECE additionally wishes to thank its staff success of our programmes and the daily running of the secretariat. Although there were financial constraints here and there, they were not perturbed but rather worked tirelessly till there saw a successful execution of all outlined programmes. We are most grateful.

2012 was good but we hope that 2013 would be better with sponsorship opportunities and funding from lots of local and international foundations and corporate organizations so that more programmes can be carried out.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The media is a powerful tool which women can use to gain recognition in society and to channel their courses. For us at WOMEC we believe so much in this that we work tirelessly to help women see this truth and grab the opportunity.

WOMEC over the decade has helped in bringing women into the limelight. This year was no exception. The two projects we undertook was to help put forward the demands of women and to hopefully get positive response.

Women have made progress especially in the decision making process and with this year being an election year we hoped that more could be seen. Indeed it has been so. We have close to thirty women who have been elected as Parliamentarians, a rise from the nineteen that we previously had.

What we as a women empowering body is waiting for are the appointments. We want to find out if it will constitute an appreciable percentage to get more women involved in the decision making process. WOMEC believes that women like Akua Sena Dansoa, and Hannah Tetteh currently ministers have not failed us hence more women should be given positions to occupy in the 6th government of the fourth republic

WOMEC contributed its quota to the females in the elections by giving some aspirants a platform on a radio programme to share what they have with the masses. Although we had financial constraints due to lack of funding throughout the year, we managed to put up an informative, educative and entertaining show.

Prior to this, WOMEC in the first half of the year represented NETRIGHT at the launch of the "Atlas of Birth", a book on maternal mortality. WOMEC focuses on women empowerment hence anything that hinders the progress of women particularly mortality is therefore of pressing need to us.

We were excited and privileged to have been part of the launch.

WOMEC is looking forward to more collaboration next year. We also hope to receive more funding to improve our work and achieve more for women. Merry Christmas and a fruitful new year to everyone.

Charity Binka (Mrs)
Executive Director

PROJECT REPORTS

PROJECT 1- PRESENT AT THE LAUNCH OF ATLAS OF BIRTH

INTRODUCTION

Maternal Mortality is a very crucial topic when it comes to women issues because almost every woman has the tendency of giving birth to a child and that is the process by which man's existence is continued. For that matter, no woman should lose her life from giving life. All women, literate or illiterate, old or young, in rural or urban regions etc. should lose her life while giving life. Women therefore are entitled to adequate health care and facilities that will reduce such maternal mortality. This issue should be of great concern to every citizen of Ghana, the sub-region, the entire continent and the world at large. Women continue to suffer gross inequalities in many ways across countries in Africa. Many governments have ratified various international and regional human rights policies to curb this canker but there is more room for improvement to achieve the MDG 5 since the action has been slow.

The right to adequate health care during and after pregnancy is a must and should not be overlooked. It should be of great interest to every government that comes into power. Women must put their voices together and cry for this menace to be totally reduced.

The 'Atlas of Birth' gives a sketch of birth statistics; i.e. the rate of death per every delivery, areas which suffer most from this maternal mortality reasons for this, and how they can be solved or helped. This book we strongly believe will open the eyes of policy makers further, and will educate the layman on the dangers women are facing in our parts of the world with regards to maternal mortality.

We strongly believe that the NETRIGHT, being one of the most vocal organizations advocating women's rights issues has a great interest in this issue as such and will continue to follow up on the book till it sees that all involved have it, are reading it, and are working with it to achieve MDG 5.

Also NETRIGHT hopes that the media follow up on the book to remind the citizenry and policy makers for that matter, from time to time the importance of the subject matter.

The Alliance for Reproductive Health Rights is a Ghanaian Non-governmental Organization that was established in 2004 by a network/group of NGOs to promote rights based approaches to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in Ghana through advocacy, capacity building and research. Membership of the ARHR comprises three national NGO'S namely: ISODEC, CEDEP, CENCOSAD, and 35 local NGOs and community based organizations operating in 38 districts in Ghana.

As a result, the ARHR exists to ensure that every Ghanaian - rich or poor, young or elderly, female or male, has access to the best reproductive health care. This is achieved by challenging systemic and structural inequalities in health systems and other basic services necessary to avoid preventable deaths, mistimed pregnancies etc through advocacy, promotion of responsive service delivery, good governance and accountability.

The book launch was held on May 4, 2012 at the Coconut Grove Regency Hotel in Accra-Ghana. About thirty participants; NGOs, midwives associations, a Member of Parliament, doctors and medical practitioners, the media (both print and electronic) etc took part in the launch.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LAUNCH

The specific objectives of the launch were:

- To make known the 'Atlas of Birth' and its contents to the general public
- To make the book available to the public
- To get policy makers on their toes to fight the menace
- To share data, knowledge and information on maternal mortality to all stakeholders to ensure critical attention is paid to the issue.
- To get everybody involved in the fight to reach the MDG5

- To share experiences, challenges, and strategies on how to reduce maternal mortality
- To strengthen networking and partnership building for all involved and interested in the issue

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Frank Nyonator, Director for Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Ghana Health Service in his opening remarks asked all to be involved in the change by spreading whatever was learnt from the launch to the public.

Dr. Nyonator noted that the launch of the 'Atlas of Birth' was timely considering the country's high mortality rate. He added that the big ceremony itself took place at Odumase Krobo on May 3, 2012 to commemorate the 'International Day of the Midwife'.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Madam Vicky Okine, Executive Director of ARHR who gave the welcome address said the launch marked a new phase of the campaign to reduce and prevent maternal deaths in Ghana. She said Ghanaians have benefitted from considerable improvement in its general health situation. Madam Okine explained that these were demonstrated by substantial gains in falling neonatal mortality and life expectancy rates. She however added that while progress has been made it has not benefitted those who need it most. She said there are geographical areas in which success has proved elusive and sadly one of these areas is maternal health.

Madam Okine said ironically Ghana is one of the many developing countries quick to ratify international conventions aimed at improving reproductive and maternal health such as; the International conference on population and development (ICPD), the Maputo plan of action, the Abuja target of allocating at least 15% of national budgets to health and the campaign to accelerate reduction of maternal mortality in Africa

(CARMMA). She was therefore surprised that till that reducing maternal and child mortality as outlined in the various documents was unattained.

Madam Okine further expatiated that although the chances of dying in child birth has reduced from 1.26 deaths in 1995 to 1.66 in 2008, it is still below the 5.5% annual decline expected to attain MDG 5 of a ¾ decline of maternal mortality ratio. She added that compounding efforts aimed at reducing maternal and child health is the dearth of reliable data especially at the district and community levels. She commended the University of Southampton for such a detailed data inclusive of maps, graphs and figures that indicate the exact numbers dying and which areas suffer most. Madam Okine was appreciative of the fact that for once, there is a document indicating the commitment, resolve and status of various promises made by policy makers to address issues of maternal mortality.

She welcomed all who had gathered to the launch stating the rationale for the gathering as to discuss the information contained in the Atlas of Birth. She urged political leaders and policy makers to work towards turning all those wonderful promises that have been made in the past and those that will be made in the electioneering period, into reality adding that this will save on a weekly basis approximately 50 women who die needlessly from child birth and more than 400 babies that die from related issues.

Madam Okine hoped that the Atlas will help CSOs to identify gaps and strengthen advocacy for more allocation of resources to underserved communities and neglected components of the fight against maternal mortality. She also expresses believe that the Atlas will be a guiding tool for research and a reference point of action for policy makers to help reduce the menace. She concluded by expressing gratitude about the collaborative effort by the White Ribbon Alliance. She said the University of Southampton, ARHR and other partners have produced the Atlas for Ghana and that such collaborations result in synergies for greater impacts to ensure that pregnancy is a safe and every woman has access to special care during pregnancy and childbirth.

THE STATE OF MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH IN GHANA BY DR. PATRICK ABOAGYE, DIRECTORATE OF FAMILY HEALTH, GHS

According to Dr. Aboagye, there is the need for every woman to have access to skilled care during pregnancy. There should also be access to emergency obstetricians and family planning. He said traditional birth attendants (TBAs) are very important especially at the district levels and therefore deserve to be trained to make them very effective to reduce mortality. He further explained that traditional ways of delivery must be reinstated adding that there should be well supervised deliveries.

Dr. Aboagye said the Atlas is indicating the road the nation will have to go and reiterating that the purpose of the Atlas is to remind everybody to keep the promises. He said the Atlas shows the extent of geographical inequalities in maternal and newborn and child health, the relevance of local-level statistics (LLS), policy, planning etc. He expatiated that some of the problems of LLS are that census data is limited and less regular. He added that surveys are more regular and collect wide range of information including those on maternal, newborn and child health.

Dr. Aboagye noted that the Central and Western regions of Ghana were lacking in the target of 2 hours to hospital. He said the upper west and eastern regions have met the target. He explained that nationwide 1/3 of the populace live beyond the 2 hour target, 45% live 2 hours or further.

In conclusion, Dr. Aboagye recommended that small area estimation, model based methods, and mixed effect models etc should be used. He also advised that the wide inequalities should be taken care of, as well as the need for local level statistics and more recent estimates.

PRESENTATION OF THE ATLAS OF BIRTH BY MR. FIIFI AMOAKO JOHNSON

Mr. Fiifi Amoako Johnson from the University Southampton from the University that conducted the research for the publication of the Atlas, made a presentation on the Atlas. He said the launch is focused on policy makers like parliamentarians who are in the position to help turn maternal mortality rates around provided they are willing to do

so. Mr. Johnson said the Atlas indicates that there is now international consensus that skilled care at birth is vital to preventing maternal and new born deaths. He explained further that in Ghana many women are getting the care they need during pregnancy but there are big differences across the regions. Furthermore, in some parts of Ghana, more than 30% of women still give birth alone or with only a neighbor or relative to help them, which is still alarming.

Mr. Johnson said in 2008, the government of Ghana made health-care free for all pregnant women, new mothers and babies- a progressive policy which has removed the huge barrier of cost and encouraged women to seek professional health care during birth. He expatiated that Ghana's free health-care policy must include provision for ambulances to bring women to our health facilities in an emergency. Mr. Johnson stated that the unacceptable length of time it takes for many women to arrive at health facilities is still costing many lives. He said additionally, women die because there is no transport when referring women with life threatening complications from the health center to a hospital. He said the Atlas advices that there is need for better referral procedures.

According to Mr. Johnson, many women in Ghana would like to avoid a pregnancy but are not using any form of family planning. Notably, at least 1 in 4 women has an unmet need for contraceptives-one of the highest levels of need in Africa. He stated that there are several maps in the Atlas that elaborate further the statistics of inequalities that still exist in accessing family planning. Mr. Johnson added that the research showed that family planning can reduce numbers of women dying in childbirth by a third.

He concluded that getting statistics for the Atlas was not at all an easy task. This was because at the time of conducting the research, the census results were not yet available. Hence they had to make do of the 2000 census statistics. Other statistics used for the Atlas were from the districts but were not all so current. Mr. Johnson pleaded that people who have current statistics should make it available for upgrade of the Atlas.

BRIEF STATEMENTS

The representatives of the Ghana Registered Midwives Association were happy about the launch of the Atlas of Births. They hoped that the nation will move from words to action. One of the midwives said the Atlas gives a real picture of how to attain MDG 5 so that Ghana will be a safer place to deliver.

The Coalition of NGOs in Health in their remarks said it is time to stop playing with women and children. They expressed excitement over the now free family planning services of the country.

The MP for Bole/Bamboi, Hon. Joseph Akati Saaka who represented parliament at the launch said the government was committed to the issue and that all the promises will be kept not only in the electioneering year but also in the years ahead. He reiterated that no woman should lose her life for giving life.

OPEN FORUM

This session was to allow participants to ask questions and give their comments/suggestions on the issue of maternal mortality in Ghana. One of the dominant issues that arose in the session was the issue of traditional birth attendants (TBAs). Participants wanted to know if there are any standardized materials for training TBAs. Additionally, they wanted to know if government approved of the TBAs. Madam Rosemary Akolaa of Oxfam advised the nation not to pull out of training TBAs but rather to redefine their role.

Dr. Aboagye added that yes TBAs are trained but the problem is that the main causes of maternal mortality like obstructed labor cannot be handled by the TBAs because such cases require advanced skills and the appropriate environment. He said TBAs can be a part of maternal delivery but not to make sole deliveries.

Participants also suggested the translation and breaking down of the Atlas so all and sundry can absorb. Dr. Appiah Denkyira of the MOH advised midwives to add passion to the work and visit pregnant women at home.

OUTCOMES

The launch of the Atlas yielded the following outcome:

- A well informed public on MDG 4
- Public well informed about maternal mortality rates and how they can help raise awareness on it
- Journalists urged to write on maternal mortality in the country
- Ministry of health asked to train and make use of TBAs
- Politicians made to pledge towards achieving MDG 4

RELEVANCE OF LAUNCH OF ATLAS OF BIRTH TO NETRIGHT

Netright which tackles the lack of a collective approach to working on national and regional processes, in the work on gender and development and the absence of debates which could lead to clear positions on women's rights has a role to play towards achieving MDG 5. The Atlas of Birth has made available authentic data on maternal mortality rates which Netright can use for advocacy.

Maternal mortality is undoubtedly a gender sensitive issue, therefore;

- Netright must take up the Atlas, analyse the data in it and organize workshops to explain the details in simple terms to the ordinary woman on the street.
- Netright should also go on air via shows like 'The Standpoint' & 'Woman to Woman' to create further awareness on the issue of maternal mortality so that the general public will be familiar with the details of the Atlas of Birth. This will keep government in check so that they do their best to fight the menace.
- Netright can also go to areas with high rates of maternal deaths to further investigate the causes and how they can help reduce the rates.

PROJECT 2 – RADIO DISCUSSION PROGRAMME ON ‘WOMEN IN POLITICS’

INTRODUCTION

The old adage, ‘if you educate a woman, you educate a nation’, arguably affects all aspects of the development of a nation including politics.

With reference to an article on *‘allAfrica.com,’* women’s participation in national decision making has shaped, and continues to shape, the political direction and destiny of Ghana. The role played by women in the struggle for Ghana’s independence in 1957 cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore we need more women to be involved in the governance of the country from the executive to the legislature, judiciary etc.

Many gender activists and gender focused NGOs, Women, Media and Change (WOMECE) inclusive, have for some time now devoted time, energy and finance to promote the notion of increased women participation in the decision making process like it is observed in countries such as Rwanda.

WOMECE thus used one episode of **‘Woman to Woman’** to help give new female aspirants of various political parties contesting this year’s elections, the platform to get closer to the general public especially women and to also lay down what they have to offer.

Questions asked included:

1. What motivated you to get into politics?
2. Kindly share some of your experiences so far with us as a first time aspirant?
3. How do you react to the assertion that politics is not a game for women because it’s a man’s world, “dirty” and unsupportive of women?
4. From what you have experienced and observed so far, do you think women are taken seriously in politics?
5. What are your target developmental projects for your constituency if you should win the December elections?
6. Have you done anything for your people so far? If so what? If not, why not? (Do you necessarily have to be an MP before you can help?)
7. Have you had the needed support from your male counterparts?
8. Any regrets for getting into politics?
9. Could you suggest ways to improve upon getting more women into Parliament and decision making positions?
10. Would you say the prospects for female political participation in Ghana are bright?

11. What Message do you have for females out there who think being a female parliamentarian is almost an impossible feat?
12. Give a message of peace to Ghanaians during the whole electioneering process.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives for organizing the radio discussion programme were to:

- Give women a platform to share what they have with their fellow women as well as the general public
- Allow women aspirants to inspire other women to get into politics and other levels of decision making
- Show the female aspirants that they have support from the public
- Allow for networking, unity, peace and harmony among women aspirants from different political divides

PANELISTS ARRIVAL AND INTRODUCTION

The three panelists invited by WOMEC for the radio discussion programme, 'Woman to Woman' on Uniiq 95.7fm arrived at about 11am, an hour to the starting time of 12:05pm.

The panelists were:

1. Jamilatu Mahmud of the People's National Convention, PNC vying for the Tema East Constituency
2. Mrs. Sedina Tamakloe-Ationu of the National Democratic Congress, NDC vying for the Anyaa-Sowutuom Constituency
3. Jessica Adwoa Simpson of the Progressive People's Party, PPP vying for the Weija Constituency

They interacted with one another as well as with the 'Woman to Woman' crew and WOMEC for familiarization prior to the commencement of the on air discussion. The Media Coordinator of WOMEC, Sangmorkie Tetteh, on the organization's behalf officially briefed them on the reason for organizing the programme and how it will benefit them and also thanked them for turning up.

Madam Fatima Quainoe, the hostess of the programme on behalf of the 'Woman to Woman' crew additionally briefed them on the format of the programme to calm their nerves as they were all first time aspirants.

DETAILS OF RADIO DISCUSSION PROGRAMME

The programme began with the hostess, Madam Fatima Quainoe briefing listeners on what WOMEC stands for and the purpose of the programme. She said the entire month of November has been dedicated to women in politics and WOMEC's programme marked the first. Madam Quainoe also introduced the panelists to the listeners.



Fatima Quainoe, hostess of 'Woman to Woman'

The first question posed to the panelists was why they are into politics. For Madam Sedina Tamakloe-Ationu, a pharmacist who is vying for the seat in Anyaa-Sowutuom on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress, the natural instinct to be successful which leads to adding value to everything she does drove her to do politics. According to her, 'instead of sitting back and looking at everybody complain, I think it's about time somebody did something'. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu explained that she has had opportunities and exposure through her many travels the world over. She has also acquired much education, having Masters Degree in International Marketing hence having seen what people like her have done or are doing to help their communities; she was inspired to do same.



Mrs. Sedina Tamakloe-Ationu of the National Democratic Congress, NDC

Madam Jessica Mantel Simpson, popularly known as Adwoa Ghana, who is vying for the Weija Constituency on the ticket of the Progressive People's Party, PPP had a different story. She said she went into politics because, 'the sitting MP in the constituency who is from the New Patriotic Party is doing nothing' hence she wants to help develop her area. Madam Simpson said many women do not have the courage to challenge men in politics but she is daring enough to do so.

A similar story was told by the aspiring MP for the Tema East Constituency who is contesting on the ticket of the People's National Convention, PNC. She is Madam Jamilatu Mahmud, a nurse by profession and a young woman. She said having lived in her constituency for so long, she saw the developments in her area when she was growing up and how the community has gone back. Madam Mahmud explained that there were libraries in her area but they have all collapsed. She said her priority will be education. She wants to revive the use of libraries in her constituency. She added that, 'I have an NGO which helps children in my area but I need an upper hand to be able to do more'.

Having heard why they are into politics, the hostess wanted to know their thoughts on whether women can do well in politics, the challenges and why they should be given the nod.

Madam Tamakloe-Ationu in her response said when people come to her with their problems and it makes the urge to fight for them much stronger everyday. She said women are naturally empathetic, thus when they see people suffering they want to help. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu gave the major challenge for women in politics as, 'trying to juggle these; being a mother, a wife, your profession and then politics'. She however emphasized that she will not change or relinquish her political career but will rather continue to pursue it because entering politics has changed her outlook about life, and the country in many ways.

Madam Simpson said women must be voted for because they manage the home and they do it well hence they can go to parliament and perform better. She also reiterated that women are sympathetic. Madam Simpson explained that people complain about men in parliament having many love affairs and mispending the people's money thus it is time for women to take up power and properly manage it.



Jessica Simpson of the Progressive People's Party, PPP

Madam Mahmud added to what her colleagues have said by expatiating that men are even fed up with their fellow men ruling. She cited some men she had come into contact

with as saying that they are going vote because they have been disappointed time and again. Madam Mahmud said she had to reorient them and these people end up helping

On the assertion that politics is a man's world, Madam Tamakloe-Ationu disagrees and said women have a place in politics just like men though it might be more challenging. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu added that women listen more and have a general flare for managing helps which them. She explained that, 'although people perceive politics to be a dirty game, if you are a competent woman you should be able to stand ground to ground with any man'. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu cited examples of women like the Nigerian finance minister, President Johnson Sirleaf, Mrs. Betty Mould Iddrisu, Hon. Hannah Tetteh and Mrs. Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings as enough role models. She advised that politics should not be looked only at the highest level because it starts from the community level all the way up. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu worried that some communities have women seeking permission from their husbands before doing politics but she is of the belief that as we progress some of these things will change. She advocated for the encouragement or more women participation at all the levels.

Having said a lot about women in politics, it was time for the panelists to inform the listeners of what their plans are for their respective constituencies.

For Madam Simpson her major worry is the going waste of the Weija water body which could be made useful to solve the never ending unemployment canker in the constituency. She said the weija water can be used for fish, rice, and vegetable farming which could create employment for the youth. She said there are no government schools in the area and no community centre as well as no community centre, clinics and other government facilities which are necessities. Madam Simpson said those are some of the problems she will address for her people.

Madam Mahmud whose focus is on education said she will to provide computers to schools, a playground/recreational centres where the children can relax after a long day of study. She also wants to lobby so that books are made available so that you can pay little to have it for use instead of paying so much to buy it. In that case the kids can leave it behind when they are moving on to another class.



Jamillatu Mahmud of the People's National Convention, PNC

Madam Tamakloe-Ationu outlined her priorities. She said her constituency is left behind in so many ways, a few being unemployment and bad drainage systems. For her she has already started something. She is helping the youth in her area, who are school dropouts but love to play soccer, with the necessary support so that they can go far in the sport. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu said she is also putting things in place to drill boreholes for her constituency with sponsorship support. She added that although a huge challenge in politics is with finance, she's got her husband's support as well as other male counterparts. She further said that people try to extort money from her on her campaign trails but she educates them so that they understand that representation is needed for long term rewards and not the immediate GHC5 or GHC10 or even a GHC100. She said Americans voted for President Barack Obama because they believe he understood their problems better and so could help them.

Madam Simpson shared similar sentiments. She said she educates people who request for money. She said that she educates them to understand that if people sell their votes, the MPs will not help them when they win and go to Parliament. She said, 'If your vote is bought you have sinned against the constituency and the nation at large. Don't take

money from the MP so that they will have a sound mind to fight your course when they get to parliament’.

Madam Mahmud commenting on funding said she does not have much funds like her male opponents who can afford to mount gigantic billboards and who have support from large organizations because they appear big and have gargantuan rallies. She said for her the people who help her are those who really need change. Madam Mahmud added that such people encourage her admitting that though finance has been a challenge she does not allow it to hinder her. She mentioned that for those who want to extort money from her, she just asks one question, “Nobody will take money from you before allowing you to vote so why do you need money from me?” for her, change of attitude of the electorates is very important.

All three aspirants noted that financing is difficult especially for women adding that no matter how well you plan, it is still not enough.

Madam Tamakloe-Ationu said she has the urge to provide a better life in the community in which she lives in. she said, “You need good representation that will yield results. Some aspirants say MPs are not for development but I disagree. MPs must lobby to assist the municipality for development”.

According to Madam Tamakloe-Ationu, more women can get involved in politics if we integrate participation at all levels starting right from school. She said females should be given leadership roles at the unit committees, market places etc. For her, Ghana having three female vice presidential candidates is a plus for women. She said they performed well at the IEA debate. Madam Tamakloe-Ationu also advised that there should be some form of assistance financially for women who venture into politics. She also called for the Affirmative Action Bill to be passed into law to help get more women up there.

Madam Simpson is of the view that women are afraid to get into politics because of the money involved and the educational level. She said some women think one must have completed the university before she can get into politics. To her, this is not so. “It’s about skills and a lot of experience as per the definition of a parliamentarian in the dictionary’. She said being a parliamentarian is about helping your constituency.

The aspirants had a message of peace for the public.

Madam Simpson said, “Everybody must have patience, we are all one and Ghanaians. If someone steps on your toes let it be”.

“Tolerance is key for peace. We have only one place and nowhere else to go. We are journeying into the next year and beyond”, was the advice of Madam Mahmud.

Madam Tamakloe-Ationu added that, “Let’s love life and Ghana. Avoid violence, maintain peace. Let’s leave the country as it is before the elections. We’ve done it five times and we are going to do it again”.

LISTENER TALKBACK SESSION

The discussions took almost all the time but the hostess allowed for a few calls and text messages. The callers encouraged the women to carry on with their dreams. They also wished them well and called on political parties to pay for women who are willing to contest. One caller also reiterated that men have failed the system. He said women have the motherly love which places them above the men. Some of the text messages advised people not to bother aspirants with money issues. Another text message urged the aspirants to be down to earth instead of being unapproachable when voted into power.

OUTCOMES, EVALUATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The special radio discussion programme focused on women in politics showed the following:

- Panelists were satisfied with the programme
- Panelists were impressed by the text messages and talkback they received from listeners
- Panelists broadened their knowledge by learning from one another and from the input of listeners
- Panelists had a an additional and wider platform to communicate to the masses

- Panelists had the opportunity to inspire their fellow women and the youth who would love to venture into politics and decision making

Evaluations obtained from participants are summarized below:

- It was very useful
- It would help their campaign
- Women in politics need more of such programmes
- WOMEC is doing well and should keep it up

Recommendations

At the end of the radio discussion programme the panelists who were aspiring Members of Parliament advised that:

- WOMEC organizes such programmes on local radio stations as well so that the uneducated masses can also understand and participate.
- Television programmes of this nature should also be organized which will be a plus for women in politics.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the programme, the Media Coordinator for WOMEC, Sangmorkie Tetteh on behalf of the organization thanked the panelists for taking time off their busy campaign and family schedules to participate in the programme. She said more brave women like them must be nurtured to get involved in the decision making process.

Madam Tetteh also thanked the 'Woman to Woman' crew for their support and for allowing WOMEC to collaborate with them to host such a worthy discussion programme.

APPENDIX

GALLERY



Panelists speaking on the 'Woman to Woman' programme on Uniiq FM



Fatima Quainoe steering the show



The production team of the show



Some panelists after the show

PANELISTS LIST

NAME	POLITICAL PARTY	CONSTITUENCY	CONTACT NUMBER
<p>Jamilatu</p>  <p>Mahmud</p>	<p>People's National Convention (PNC)</p>	<p>Tema East</p>	<p>0206009494/0246588970</p>
<p>Mrs. Sedina Tamakloe- Ationu</p> 	<p>National Democratic Congress (NDC)</p>	<p>Anya-Sowutuom</p>	<p>0249244460</p>
<p>Jessica Adwoa Simpson</p> 	<p>Progressive People's Party (PPP)</p>	<p>Weija</p>	<p>0244287568</p>

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR WOMEC RADIO PROGRAMME

Items	Number of Days/Quantity	Total Amount in GHC
Airtime	1hr	230.00
Token for Production Crew	2	200.00
Token for participants	3	600.00
Transportation Cost		150.00
Lunch Package	3	100.00
Coordination & Communication		50.00
Miscellaneous		50.00
Report writing		200.00
TOTAL		GHC 1,580.00

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN EXECUTING PROJECTS

Some of the challenges encountered during the projects were:

- With getting panelists for the radio programme since they were not willing to participate and some were too busy with campaigning
- Financial constraint was also a major challenge for us this year and so we could not organize many programmes



WOMEN MEDIA AND CHANGE (WOMECC)

P.O. Box GP 14550 Accra, Ghana, W/A

No. 10 Joe Reindorf Street, Parakuo Estate, Dome, Accra-Ghana
Tel: +233 21414494, Tel/Fax: +23321401550

E-mail: womec@hotmail.com Website: www.womec.org